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# Inguinal hernia

## Overview

By Mayo Clinic Staff

An inguinal hernia occurs when tissue, such as part of the intestine, protrudes through a weak spot in the abdominal muscles. The resulting bulge can be painful, especially when you cough, bend over or lift a heavy object.

An inguinal hernia isn't necessarily dangerous. It doesn't improve on its own, however, and can lead to life-threatening complications. Your doctor is likely to recommend surgery to fix an inguinal hernia that's painful or enlarging. Inguinal hernia repair is a common surgical procedure.

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